



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Canyon National Park

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## Grand Canyon News Release

Release date: Immediate

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### Fire Update: Grand Canyon National Park, August 3, 2009

**Grand Canyon, Ariz.** – The Cape Royal Road on the North Rim of Grand Canyon National Park remains closed as fire management staff continue to manage the Aspen Fire for resource benefits.

#### Fire Activity

The **Aspen Fire**, located on the Walhalla Plateau approximately 3.5 miles east of the North Rim developed area, grew to approximately 1,670 acres on Sunday. Warm, dry conditions combined with west winds to move the fire eastward where a small portion of the fire crossed over the Cape Royal Road, necessitating an indefinite extension of the temporary closure already in place on the road. The fire is burning in mixed vegetation, consisting of ponderosa pine with fir and Mexican locust, as well as dead and down logs from the 2001 Vista Fire.

Firefighters are currently managing the Aspen Fire with mixed resource objectives. Firefighters conducted burnout operations north of the fire over the weekend in an effort to limit growth toward the Walhalla Neck where fire would significantly impact the Cape Royal Road. On the fire's eastern flank, firefighters are working to pinch off the portion of the fire on the east side of the Cape Royal Road with the ultimate goal of reopening the road. The rest of the fire continues to be managed for resource benefits.

Currently, over 85 personnel from the National Park Service, the US Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the Central Yavapai Fire District are engaged in fire management activities on the Aspen Fire.

Five additional fires are currently being monitored and managed in Grand Canyon National Park. All are on the North Rim:

- The **Angel Fire** (3 acre) is being suppressed at this time in order to allow fire managers to focus their efforts on the Aspen Fire.
- The **Butte Fire** (5 acres) has been inactive in the inner canyon east of Walhalla Plateau.

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- The **Point Fire** (2 acres) was contained last week and will be in patrol status until it is declared out.
- The **Poplar Fire** (0.1 acres) is being managed for resource benefits and is smoldering in dead and down logs from the 2003 Poplar Fire.
- The **Thompson Fire** (1 acre) has been controlled and will be in patrol status until it is declared out.

### **Roads and Restrictions**

- The Cape Royal Road remains closed at this time.
- All other roads and facilities in the park are open at this time.
- Some backcountry restrictions may apply on the Walhalla Plateau as firefighters continue to manage the Aspen Fire. Check in at the North Rim Backcountry Office for the most current information.

### **Smoke**

Visitors to the North Rim will see smoke from the Aspen fire from the North Rim developed area. Smoke from the fires is also visible from South Rim viewpoints. In addition, smoke has been settling into Bright Angel Canyon during the evening hours. Coordination with the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality is ongoing.

### **Objectives**

The Poplar and Aspen Fire are all being managed for resource benefits. The benefits fire managers expect to achieve with these fires include maintaining fire in a fire-dependent ecosystem, reducing heavy fuel loads that can increase the risk of large fires that exhibit undesirable fire behaviors and effects, recycling of nutrients and diversification of wildlife habitat.

Additional news releases about these fires will be posted as significant changes in size, fire activity or management objectives occur.

For more information, please contact Fire Information Officer Connie Birkland at 928-638-7066. For more on the fire management program at Grand Canyon National Park, please visit the park's web site at <http://www.nps.gov/grca/parkmgmt/firemanagement.htm>. For more on visiting the backcountry in the park, please call the park's backcountry office at 928-638-7875.

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